

HILDEGARDE

AND OTHER LYRICS

BY

MARGRET HOLMES BATES



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MARGRET HOLMES BATES



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THE contents of this small book have been making for more years than I care to count. The verses have been published in newspapers and magazines in Chicago, New York, Boston, and many smaller cities. The selection of what I consider the best out of many hundreds in my old scrap-book, and having them put into permanent form, is mainly to please the boy who was the inspiration of so many of them. I attach no value to them in a literary way. To this boy, in memory of many happy days, the book is dedicated.

M. H. B.

New York, July, 1911.

HILDEGARDE AND OTHER LYRICS

HILDEGARDE

Young Hildegarde beside her cottage door
Sat at her spinning when the sun was low;
The shadows stole athwart the sanded floor,
The long sun lances set the hills aglow,
While twilight soft wrapt all the vale below.

Her humming wheel the little maid forgets,
Her blue eyes wander from the verdant sward
Flecked with her own sweet mountain violets,
Swept by the breeze, with sun and shadow barred,
Far up the mountain side all seamed and scarred.

Old grandsire Herman left his easy chair
And turned his dim eyes toward the waning light;
He murmured softly: "Earth is very fair;
How grand the day; how beautiful the night;
How dear it all is to my fading sight."

Came to these two as from the cool moist ground,
The ringing of the convent curfew bell;
And echo caught it; waves of silvery sound
Rose to the heights with joyous peal and swell,
Then backward swung to die within the dell.

They stood there in the sunset's dying gleam,
And watched the flame on the horizon's rim;
The convent walls, like walls seen in a dream,
Stood half defined down in the valley dim,
And faintly rose the nuns' sweet evening hymn.

Then Hildegarde, with eyes brimful of peace;
Folds her brown hands—a smile is on her lips:
"Praise God, Oh, earth for all thy fair increase;
Praise Him, each one who of her nectar sips;
And praise Him, ye, down on the sea in ships."

Too joyful seemed the girl to kneel in prayer;
She stood with face uplifted to the skies;
She heard a step, and turned, with kindly care,
Yet, with the enraptured look deep in her eyes,
As one who'd caught a glimpse of paradise.

A black-robed Sister there beside her stood,
Weary with toiling on the mountain side
For some poor suffering fellow creature's good.
"Ah, Hildegarde," she said, and saying sighed,
"And have I come, once more to be denied?

"Will you not come with me from all these toils
That nourish but the sinful flesh alone,
While the sad spirit frets with hurts and soils,
And hearts grow harder than our mountain stone;
Come, child, find peace that you have never known."

"Nay, Sister Agnes," Hildegarde replied,
"What is there here to break our quietude?
Peace dwells upon this sunny mountain side,
And in our dear old cot, though plain and rude,
None but our friends have ever dared intrude.

"Here grow my vines, and here I've planted flowers;
And here I feed the merry wild wood birds
That sing to me through many happy hours;
Adown yon path go all the flocks and herds,
They wait, sometimes, to hear my kindly words.

"No dismal shadow e'er is o'er me cast;
Naught is unkind; the fickle, wand'ring breeze
Brings odors from the fields which it has passed;
And watching friends seem all these gray old trees;
What could be purer, truer than are these?

"I could not worship God with beads and books;
I could not pray, hemmed in by four stone walls;
I want the music of the running brooks,
The hum of bees, the birds with wild sweet calls,
The whispering leaves and babbling water-falls.

"And, like a guardian angel, strong to save,
See yonder mound, warm in the sunset's glow;
You know it well—my fair young mother's grave;
You know how brightly there the flowers blow
All for the precious heart that lies below.

"And who would my dear grandsire soothe and cheer?
My soldier father, lying dead in Spain,
Was all he had. My duty sure is here;
And, Sister Agnes, I would not complain
If I for Grandsire bore a world of pain."

"Yes, Hildegarde, but Herman's old, and when
He shall no longer need your gentle care,
Ah, child, I hope and pray for you that then,
For every gleam of gold in your brown hair
There be not laid for you the tempter's snare."

Then Hildegarde, with cheek and eye alight
With that strange fire ne'er found on land or sea,
Said, "Sister Agnes, every morn and night
A shepherd lad waits by yon ancient tree
To speak to Grandsire, and—he's—kind—to—me."



NINEVEH

I heard the call, yet, heedless turned away
To ply the distaff and to train the vine;
With petty cares I filled the livelong day;
I decked my household all in vesture fine,
I made my brass and silver glint and shine;
And not one neighbor, passing to and fro,
E'er guessed that I had had command to go
To Nineveh.

And I was glad. My garden grew apace;
My house stood smiling on the passer-by;
Content and peace, sat each in honored place;
There was no cloud; but, when the sun was high,
When all seemed fairest to the outward eye,
Came back to me—how sweet the memory seemed—
The days gone by when I had planned and dreamed
Of Nineveh.

And, I would go—some day when tasks were done,
—And not too weary—in my pilgrim's gown,
My feet should travel faster than the sun:
When woods were crimson and when fields were brown;
When skies were deep and stars looked coldly down;

When summer's glories all had ceased to live
I'd hie me forth, and straight my message give
To Nineveh.

Oh vain delay! The seasons came and passed,
With winds and clouds and shining summer showers;
Each full of care, each dearer than the last:—
When song and mirth filled up the wintry hours,
They fairer seemed than summer's fruits and flowers;
Could I forego the smiles of comrades gay?
I half believed that I had naught to say
To Nineveh.

Then came the storm, it raved about my head;
It swept the earth, my treasures wrapt in flames;
My hosts of friends, forgetful, false or dead,
Or busied all, with happy thoughts and aims,
Gave back no answer when I called their names.
The sea arose, and utter ruin wrought;
Within the flood, with empty hands, I thought
Of Nineveh.

Naught else to do, upon my way I fared;
The wind was cold, and cold the driving rain:
No living thing my dreary journey shared.
I only hoped some shelter I might gain
Ere night should fall upon the treeless plain.
I raised my eyes; against the sunset fires,
Low in the west, I saw the gleaming spires
Of Nineveh.

FORGIVEN

Can I forgive you? Wait; I first must take
 Account of all that you have robbed me of;
Must feel again the stunning, blinding ache
 Of heart when rifled of the one fair love
That made my life. I must in line recall
 All I possessed before your lifepath led
Into my own. I must remember all
 The scathing words that your false lips have said.

I must review the starless, ebon nights,
 And all the sodden, anguish-drunken days;
And back of these, recall the sunlit heights
 From which you haled me, down to stony ways
That outcasts tread; remind me of the scorn
 With which you turned me from my rightful door:
Can you conceive a heart of woman born
 That would forgive, would cancel out the score?

But, while I reckon all your scurvy spite,
 And fairly in your face my ruin fling,
Your soul comes forth and stands within the light;
 Your *soul*—a shrunken, shapeless, dwarfish thing.
It stares abashed; 'tis loath to recognize
 The havoc wrought within my peaceful gate;
It shivers, whines, and hides its blinking eyes;
 And I must pity where I fain would hate.

Lo, many years this evil thing had grown
 And crawled through crooked, dark and filthy ways;
Upon the harvests its own hands had sown,
 It grew in strength through eons of black days;

And then it came to take the honored place
My hands had built through years of toil and care;
Did I not shrink when first I saw your face?
Unknown to me, this soul was lurking there.

But, since I know, I find a gracious strength
Has come to me: I stand alone, upright,
Like a bold wrestler, conqueror at length
Though cheated oft in an uneven fight;
And I am shamed that through these darkened years,
Against a foe like this I've stood and striven;
I'll strive no more, waste no more useless tears;
Now that I know you—go—you are forgiven.

AN INVOCATION

Come from thy silent, shadowy dominions;
Oh gentle Sleep;
I long to feel thy dark and noiseless pinions
Around me sweep.
I ask thee not that beatific vision
My rest shall steep
Nor that I walk with thee through fields elysian
Oh gentle Sleep.

Let but thy kindly presence near me linger
Thine own watch keep;
Press down my eyelids with thine unseen finger
Oh gentle Sleep!
Let Time's rough stream be calm as Lethe's flowing
As dark, and deep;—
Speed, speed thy coming, long delay thy going,
Oh gentle Sleep.

The waking hours with conflicts strange beset me,
My hands they heap
With petty cares—I pray do not forget me,
Oh gentle Sleep!
If, in thy stead shall come that dreaded other
My days to reap,
I'll welcome him, thy gracious elder brother,
Oh gentle Sleep.

WHAT PROFIT?

The long day was over, a day full of care,
And I sat till the midnight to reckon my gains;
There were diamonds that flashed in the lamp's yellow glare;
From intricate looms there were fabrics most rare;
There were silver and jewels, enough and to spare;
Rich guerdon for labor and pains.

How the day passed for others I knew not nor cared
Nor recked I the place where the needy abode;
My dues I collected nor pitied nor spared;
My coffers were filled though my neighbor's were bared;
Where the stranger lay wounded I stolidly fared
Down the opposite side of the road.

A touch on my shoulder—I turned in affright;
Within my strong dwelling I lived all alone;
I saw a tall angel in raiment of white;—
My shadowy room by her presence grew bright;
She held by the hand—Oh, piteous sight!
A starveling soul—*'twas my own!*

"What profit?" she asked, and her sad, solemn eyes
 Were bent on that soul standing there lean and
 stark;—
"Has this, your immortal grown gracious and wise?
 If you gain the whole world will its riches suffice
To still for one moment the moans and the cries
 Of this, from its place in the dark?

"God's children go hungry in all your broad land;
 The widow and orphan lie dead at your gate;
Alone in your ill-gotten splendor you stand,—
 Not even a dog knows the touch of your hand;
Your soul comes to-night her release to demand
 From you, ere forever too late."

She vanished, and there, in the shadow of doom
 I stood, with my famished immortal alone;
Why question what passed in those hours of gloom?
 When the eastern horizon was bright with the bloom
Of sunrise, redeemed I passed out of that room;
 My soul was possessed of her own.

IN THE KING'S OWN TIME

Fair lay the light over all the hills;
The summer pulsed with the song-bird's trills;
The land was glad as the laughing rills
 That blithely ran toward the waiting sea;
 But the joy of the day was lost to me.

I stood alone where the fountain's play,
My tears fell fast as the shining spray;
For Mordecai sat in the King's gate-way.

The sun sank low in the burning west,
Each bird flew home to its downy nest.
The fair full moon with her silvery light
Made sweet the hush of the solemn night.

I stood where the deepest shadows lay
And grieved till the dawn came, chill and gray,
For Mordecai sat in the King's gate-way.

The sun shone warm through a veil of mist
From a bed of pink and amethyst;
And all the world of dale and height
Grew glad and smiled in the golden light.
The rills laughed on to the constant sea
And a herald came from the King to me.

He laid at my feet the royal wand,
He spake me humbly the King's command,
And placed me high at the King's right hand.

CHLORIS ON THE STAIRS

I sit beyond the portière,
Within the parlor, cool and shady;
In full view of the oaken stair
Down which there comes a radiant lady

In gown of palest lilac tone
And lilac perfume stealing faintly,
As if by gentlest breezes blown
From garden tree: Ah me, how quaintly

Sweet are the fashions now-a-days;
I sit and watch my lady coming:

I wonder if she feels my gaze
 The while so absently she's humming

That little song of "Sweet Marie";
 I watch and wonder, can this surely
Be my own Chloris that I see,
 With tresses parted so demurely

Above a brow as lily-fair
 As e'er had any Saxon maiden;
One might suppose, her own grandmere
 With hoop and patch and powder laden,

Had stepped from out that ancient frame,
 Above her, there upon the landing;
The hair, the eyes, the gown the same,
 The same the bird-like poise when standing.

But no; I see a shining ring
 Upon my lady's pink-tipped finger,—
I put it there—but will she sing
 And on the stairs forever linger?

While I sit wrapt in hazy dreams
 Of angels from the skies descending
In lilac gowns with golden gleams,
 On oaken stairs that have no ending.

THE GREATER

I paused in my walk and gazed within,
 Where band and pulley and wheel
From morn till eve never ceased to spin,
 And the clinking hammers made merry din
On the white-hot iron and steel.

I said, Oh wondrous insensate things,
The toil of a thousand men
For you is play, and your great band clings
To the whirring wheel, and the metal rings
To the listening world, Amen.

Your strength and skill the hand of man
May strive to find in vain;
Then through all the place a whisper ran
"Oh long ago on this selfsame place
We lived in a human brain."

A PROPHECY

Cousin Aurelia, bending over
Your 'broidery frame through the long still hours,
Stitching daisies and purple clover
And spikes of gorgeous cardinal flowers,

All the sweet bright summer unheeding,
Save when your floss by the wind is stirred
You chide the rover, your work impeding,
By lifting eyes with weariness blurred.

What will it profit you, little cousin?
Will you gain wisdom, or wealth or fame
In days that run into months, a dozen,
While you bend over your 'broidery frame?

Will you be paid when friends shall praise you?
Will you regret when those less kind
With their superior skill amaze you,
Hinting at faults you cannot find?

What do you dream will be the guerdon?
 Forward, backward your needle slips;
Your work, your dreams are sure no burden
 To guess by the curve of your rose-red lips.

What do you dream? that horn of plenty
 Your magic fingers will soon complete;
Cousin Aurelia, fair and twenty,
 Your work I label sweets from the sweet.

What do you dream while so demurely
 Stitching that tuft of tangled grass?
You will not tell? I'll guess; now surely
 Something like this will come to pass:

Far in the future, dim, uncertain,
 A girl of the time will yawn some day:
"My great-grandmother made this curtain,
 And ruined her handsome eyes,—they say."

THE PANORAMA OF THE YEAR

My friends, should I here in these pages declare
 This old world of ours is never so fair
As when each long day with its swift train of hours
 Is registered duly in beautiful flowers;
Should I tell you the crystal clear rivers and rills
 Laugh like sweet human things as they leap from the hills
And adown the long way as they dance to the seas
 Coquet with the winds, the birds and the trees,
While the hills smiling downward uplift their green hands

In mute benediction o'er all the glad lands
From the zenith all 'round the horizon's blue wall
But,—*the trail of the serpent is over it all;*—
You might say, "Put this croaker up high on her shelf:
I'll go out and examine the world for myself."
And then should I call you and kindly explain,
At the imminent risk of appearing profane,
That it isn't a literal snake that I mean
But the huge crawling thing that in Eden was seen;—
The ugly, materialized spirit of evil;
Politely named Satan—for short called the devil;
Should remind you, since ever he tempted our mother
He's deluded us all in one way or another.
To this, you might say to me, "Lay on the table
That obsolete, antediluvian fable;—
'Twas translated wrong, and not told right at first;
Science gives us no evidence that we're accursed."
Should I tell you, because of the presence of sin
In the world all its beauties no sooner begin
To bloom than they die; that each beautiful day
Is a mask for the features of death and decay;
Then I'm sure you'd aver that a vain, foolish thing
I had said;—that the charm of the fair, fickle spring
Is the promise she bears on her blossomy wing
Of Summer, the royal; and she, 'midst her glories
Is daily relating us wonderful stories
Of Autumn, the brown Prince of Plenty and mirth
Who, planting his banners o'er all the warm earth,
Enters on his inheritance blithely and bold,
His kingdom resplendent in crimson and gold.
He pledges his truth in the purest of wine
And crowns us his brothers with leaves from the vine.
We follow him gaily across the wide plains,

Still heaping up higher our laboring wains.
With the treasures he gives us: past reed hidden rills
And leaving our footprints on golden brown hills;
We gain health and strength and ineffable graces
From his odorous breath blowing back in our faces.
And when his reign's over with softest adieu
He draws a gray pall over heaven's fair blue;
When clouds dark and heavy send down their cold showers,
'Tis the Prince shedding tears on the graves of the flowers.
We'll think of him kindly, then joyously greet
His white-haired successor who spreads for our feet
His mantle of ermine, the king who allows
The maddest of mirth and the wildest carouse
In his court, where he sits crowned with mistletoe boughs.
Oh wonderful king! Your magical breath
Has wrought a miraculous change, but not death.
'Tis the season of rest; the sweet, timely sleep
Nature gives her beloved; and her watch she will keep
Like a fair human mother; she'll loiter and linger
To hush every sound with her uplifted finger.
Nature knows not of evil; she cares not a pin
For the words or the meaning of goodness or sin.
She knows not of death; but her changes she'll ring
And the stars as they sang will continue to sing.
This and more may be said by a soul that's in tune
With Nature, our mother; and reading the rune
Of ashes to ashes and dust unto dust
Should give us no fear, but strengthen our trust
That the care that guards infinitesimal things
That dart through the waters or sail upon wings,

That balances justly the sunshine and showers
To bring to perfection the fruits and the flowers,
Will never forget, in her intricate plan
The very best good for her masterpiece, *Man.*



SISTERS

Poor, old and blind, she stood beside the way,
A beggar, stretching forth her wrinkled palms,
From chilly dawn till evening dim and gray,
Receiving from the passers scanty alms.

One came who, in a far-off yesterday,
Had stood with her beside one mother's knee;—
From lips long dust with her had learned to pray;—
Peered in the sallow, shrivelled face to see

If, haply, all the gracious light of day
Left her in lonely darkness most complete;
Then, with deft fingers swept the alms away,
And, so enriched, passed on adown the street.



ONLY A DOG

Only a dog; and there he lies,
The shrunken lids over sightless eyes;
The kindest word in the gentlest tone
No movement brings to these limbs of stone.

No soft caress from the best-loved hand
Will the death-locked senses understand,

And for touch and word give swift replies;
What a world of love in this dumb thing dies.

Only a dog! Ah friend, what then?
Did he lack the soul that is given to men?
Of a better soul he died possessed;
The soul of truth was within his breast;

And the loyal heart that vigil kept
While friends with souls have soundly slept.
But, leave him there in his lowly bed;
And, bar the door—since the dog is dead.

LAMIA

If I had seen you lying still and white,
With death-dew ling'ring in your sunny hair,
Your pulseless fingers clasping lilies fair,
The bar of silence on your sweet lips prest,
No answering throb within your icy breast,
Your azure eyes, with all their laughing light
Forever closed—Oh love, my sweet, my own;
Such grief as mine, no mortal e'er had known.

And yet, remembering all the blessedness
Of all the days we two had passed together,
The days of storm and clouds, the days of sunny weather,
I could have leaned, the last long kiss to press,
The last time round my own your fingers twine,
And whisper, "All is well—Thy will, not mine."

But, Oh to know that all the glorious dower
Of beauty that has held my soul in thrall,
Is but a whited sepulcher! The power
That spake through laughing eyes and sunny hair
Is naught but Lamia, whom my love and care
Would from her place amongst the weeds recall!
To know you walk beneath the smiling sky
The basest of all base, a shameless lie!—
This quenches faith! I lift to heaven no cry;
I know no heaven—I know but this, that you
Have been my soul! and you have been untrue.

THE REASON WHY

"I love my love, I love my love,
Because I know my love loves me."
A girlish form, a flower-like face,
Half womanly, half childish grace,
Hair of a soft and sunny brown,
Deep violet eyes, with lids cast down,
And flushing cheeks, and lips apart,
As if the secret of her heart
Was warbled forth for all to know
And understand the radiant glow
That lights her eyes so happily,
With light ne'er found on land or sea—
"Because I know, my love loves me."

She sang, I listened, and her song
By twilight breezes borne along,
Seemed gathering all things pure and sweet
To lay an offering at her feet.

The songs of birds, the rustling leaves
 Of summer, and the harvest sheaves,
Soft floating echoes, like the sound
 Of waters gliding underground;
Broad fields of clover and the bee
 That wandered there, marauder free,
Seemed echoing, "My love loves me."

Ah, well, my darling, if to-night
 Beside me in the pale twilight,
This little song you sing so well
 Has told more than you meant to tell,
I'll keep your secret, though some pain
 Is brought me by the sweet refrain;
A jealous pang to fret my heart,
 Knowing that we some day must part;
And then, whate'er the loss to me,
 I hope that still your song may be
"I love because my love loves me."

AN UNDER-CURRENT

(After T. B. Aldrich)

I wonder which end of the horn
 I'll be in at the end of the year;
I wonder, if I should get awfully "squeezed"
 If I wouldn't feel awfully queer.

What a shocking idea to come
 As I sit in my opera chair
With Lillian so tenderly near, my mustache
 Is brushed by the bangs of her hair.

"Dear, how do you like that bass?
And isn't that tenor forlorn?"
I answer the chat of my soon-to-be bride
And—wonder which end of the horn.

When I kissed her good-night at her door,
We reckoned, with childish delight
The days, but a few, that must drag themselves by
Till we should no more say good-night.

And then as I traversed the streets
The happiest man ever born
I thought of the projects I had on my hands
And wondered—which end of the horn.

A DREAM OF THE GODS

Young Ariel watched the sun go down
And the shadows cool and gray
Came up the valley and over the town,
And she crept where the deepest lay.

The livelong day her enemy's tongue
Had laden the air with stings;
His words to her heart and memory clung
As the poison ivy clings.

When on her pillow she laid her head,
In her helplessness she wept
The tears of the lone, uncomforted;
And 'twas hours before she slept.

Then, far in the night when deep sleep fell
On the race that grieves and plods,
Her soul walked forth to the lands where dwell
The immortal sleepless gods.

The air was misty with human tears
And heavy with human cares;
A clamor of laughter and curses and jeers
Rose above the murmured prayers.

But the silent gods moved to and fro
And sifted with powerful hands
The sins and wrongs, the weal and the woe
Like to children sifting sands.

Their great calm eyes never weary grew
Their hands let nothing fall;
Were it mountain weight or a drop of dew
They with justice measured all.

Two walked apart with low-bowed heads
And in meditation long;
They held in their hands the tangled threads
Of a grievous human wrong.

They marked the trend of each spiteful thought
That ran through the warp and woof;
The evil by malice and falsehood wrought,
And that soul, standing there aloof,

In awful wonder and silence gazed;
So patient and wise she'd grown;
The gods are just and she stood amazed;
That great wrong was her own.

Next fair sweet day, in his wrath and spite
Came again her enemy;
She answered, "The gods of truth and right
Are judging 'twixt you and me."



THE MILLER OF TANGLETOWN

It was Sunday morn at Tangletown,
And the air was sweet and still;
It scarce would waft the thistle-down,
But let it skim, or swim, or drown,
In the pond, that lay so warm and brown
Below the old stone mill.

The miller sat by his own house door,
With his bible on his knee.
He was hale and strong, and full three-score,
And he turned the leaves of the good book o'er,
And read and smiled, and smiled the more
When his wife came in to see.

She rustled about in her Sunday air,
And her shining Sunday silk,
That she smoothed with hands so fat and fair,
Then gave a touch, with modest care,
To her crown of wavy satin hair,
As soft and white as milk.

He spake, "My dear, say what you will,
'Tis just as I've said before;
When God designs any place to fill
With woe and sorrow, the folks to kill,
He'll say that the millstone and the mill
Shall be heard in it no more.

"And you see, my dear, we always know
By the mill about the crop.
No need to go out to see it grow,
Nor read the reports the papers show;
But be sure that the whole great world runs slow
When the mill and the millstone stop."

His wife smiled calmly, as women can,
When the right is all their own;
She waved her turkey feather fan
And sighed a little, as she began:
"You know, my dear, that sinful man
Can not live by bread alone."

"Why, there's no need!" and the miller frowned;
"How often must I say
That so many different flours are ground,
And so many different ways are found
To mix them up—why, I'll be bound,
We might eat cakes twice a day."

THE MILL'S MESSAGE

The watchers sat by the fair young dead,
While the night grew dark and still;
They pillowed in flowers the golden head,
And few and low were the words they said,
No sound was heard but the watchman's tread,
And the ceaseless throb of the mill.

The mother leaned from her window's height,
And shook her care-worn hand.
"Oh Mill," she cried, "is your heart so light
That you work and sing through the live-long night,
While my darling lies in her robe of white
Where the flick'ring candles stand?

"The clock has stopped his noisy pace,
And the lights are burning low;
We've hidden the mirror's tell-tale face,
The house-dog whines—God give him grace!
The bees have left their accustomed place,
Out where the lilacs grow.

"All grieve but you, oh, heedless Mill,
For my darling lying dead!
Will your restless wheels for an hour be still,
While the sable train winds over the hill,
To leave her there in the dark and chill
Of her low and narrow bed?"

Then the ceaseless throb took a softer tone,
And the mother leaning there,
With heart of lead and eyes of stone,
In the grief of griefs that the soul has known,
Heard gentle words that were gently blown
On the fragrant midnight air.

"O, stricken one, your words unsay,
Till time your sorrow heals!
I shall miss the child with her graceful play
Through my rooms with dust and cobwebs gray,
I shall grieve for her songs and laughter gay
In time with my whirring wheels;

"But I dare not stop, though my heart may break;
For millions are living still;
The hungry wail while your watchers wake
And tell their beads for your darling's sake;
The starving die while your plaint you make
'Gainst the toiling of the mill.

"I look on my store of golden corn,
And sigh for the dead one's hair;
The blue and rose of the rising morn
Are her eye and cheek, but my grief is worn
Within my breast, for the daily born
Still claim my toil and care."

The birds sang loud over vale and hill
To greet the coming dawn;
The mother slept 'gainst the window sill,
The watchers shivered: "The air grows chill,"
And dropped their beads, but they heard the mill
Throbbing and toiling on.

VICE VERSA

My love was christened Isabel;
I wrote her odes and sonnets
Upon her hair, her eyes, and shrined
In madrigals her bonnets.

Her fair young face was held within
My heart's most sacred cella:
Her name was not half sweet enough,
I called her Donna Bella.

Since we are married, she who erst
Was meek as Saint Saronna
Has poisoned all my joy, so now,
I call her—Bella Donna.



SISTER VERONICA

Her life-path winds through shadowed ways,
And many days
Are hidden deep in grief and pain
And drenched with sorrow's tears:
And many nights, with saintly grace,
Of heart and hand she keeps her place
Where life and death stand face to face.
Whoe'er it needs, receives her care
Together with her earnest prayer.
Unquestioning, serene and still,
She waits but for the Master's will.

And so whene'er the angel calls
And twilight falls,
And this sweet soul within the boat
That sails the waveless sea
Is faring home, her kindly deeds
For others' woes, for others' needs
Shall spring to life like buried seeds
Of lotus, and the darksome way
Grow whiter than the whitest day;
And clouds of perfume shall arise
To waft her into paradise.

A DECLARATION

I lay my heart and all my worldly chattels,
 Before the well-shod feet
Of her to whom the fads, the feuds, the battles
 Of women's clubs are sweet.

You see, she's toiling, not for fame and glory;
 Her daily strenuous pace
Is to secure some spiced, authentic story
 With which to fill her space.

And if, sometimes, her own imagination
 A whole big page shall fill,
Why should we "scrap" about this revelation
 Of her inventive skill?

Women of clubs should honor and support her
 And help her do her part;
The versatile and ready girl reporter,
 Possesses my whole heart.

LITTLE SAINT CECELIA

"Lamb of God who takest away
 The sins of the world"—I paused to hear
In a city street on a busy day
 A voice that rang so strong and clear

It soared above the ceaseless din
 Of toil and trade. I sighed "Ah me!
That voice so sweet should chant of sin!
 Where can the church and altar be?"

"Have mercy upon us," floated down
 Over the hurrying throng of men;
A leering miser, lean and brown,
 Bared his gray head and breathed "Amen."

A lady drew, with dainty care,
 From a beggar's touch her rich array,
Then stared, amazed to hear the prayer:
 "Lamb of God, who takest away

The sins of the world"—for sake of Him
 She bended low to understand;
"Have mercy upon us": her eyes grew dim
 As she dropped a coin in the beggar's hand.

No church was near, no holy fane,
 But a tenement-house across the way
With many a shattered window-pane,
 Against the sky rose grim and gray:

And close below the ragged roof,
 Her bare arms on the window sill
The little singer stood, as proof
 Against the wintry morning's chill.

"Who is she?" ran from lip to lip
 As slowly moved the crowd away;
A cartman lowered his heavy whip:
 "'Tis little Saint Cecelia."

Then answering to those who smiled:
 "If God himself has worn our clay
And lived with us, a little child,
 Why should not Saint Cecelia?

"I hear her sing at busy noon,
And in the mornings, dark and still;
On stormy nights, the self-same tune,
And, leaning on the window sill

"Yon little child, with eyes like stars
Pours forth her prayer for sinful men,
Like angel held by prison bars:—
'Tis Saint Cecelia come again."

I walked adown the noisy street
Intent on cares that racked the day,
And, following, like an echo sweet,
"Lamb of God, who takest away"—

The rest was lost; but that small face
With shining eyes and gypsy hair,
The wondrous voice, the childish grace
Seemed to my heart a living prayer

That walked with me through all the day
And kept my soul from sin and stain:
"Lamb of God, who takest away
The sins of the world" by shame and pain,

"Have mercy upon us," each and all
Though far and oft our feet shall stray;
And let thy dearest blessings fall
On little Saint Cecilia.

CHILD MARGRET'S WHEAT

Child Margret sat where the shadows lay,
Through the summer afternoon;
The world might sigh, but her heart was gay,
And in time with the cat-bird's roundelay,
She sang a merry tune.

Her gaze was turned, well satisfied
To the ripened fields of wheat,
That stretched away to the river-side,
And she sang, "The world is long and wide
And the days are long and sweet."

She lifted dark brown questioning eyes,
As a strong hand touched her swing;
A weary traveller, old and wise,
Answered her look of calm surprise:
"I stopped to hear you sing."

"Nay, tell me where you have been," she said;
"And tell me what you have seen;
Here's drink from the spring, a rest for your head,
In my father's chair, or the grass instead;
The west wind's blowing keen."

The traveller talked to the listening child,
As he rested on the grass,
Of glaciers up to the heavens piled;
Of dark deep glens where the sun ne'er smiled,
And no foot of man might pass.

Then she said, while her eyes were wide and bright,
And her voice was low and sweet,
"You must stay till the frost is silver white
And the moon is round in the sky at night,
And see our ricks of wheat."

He told her of crossing the stormy seas,
And of sand storms on the plain;
She said, "Do the sand waves in the breeze
And the ocean waves, run fast as these
You see in our fields of grain?"

He told her of wand'ring weary days
Through the desert's trackless sand;
How his ship was wrecked in a morning's haze,
Of drifting a week through unknown ways,
Till he reached an unknown land.

She said, "I know it is very far,"
And her soft eyes pitied him;
"I started once at the wheat field bar,
And I tried to reach the first small star
That grows on the very rim

"Of the sky down there by the further side,
But the grasses caught my feet,—
I fell, I was tired and lost,—I cried:—
Is the desert and ocean as long and wide
As my father's fields of wheat?"

The traveller talked till the sun went down,
And the distant reaper's whir
Was still; and the child with eyes of brown,
Listened to him with smile or frown,
But he never astonished her.

THE LAST STRAW

Yes, I'm married; and though to my friends it is strange,
To me it's a wondrous, a rapturous change.
I'm married and settled, without a regret;
And 'twas all brought about by a "Queen" cigarette.

You see, it was this way: 'twas house-cleaning time,
And odors of soapsuds, of dampness, and lime
Pervaded the attic, the closets, the stairs,
While the bedrooms were donning their springtime repairs.

One day I came home with a pain in my head,
When I knew that my bookcase reposed in my bed;
My dresser was veiled, while each chair stood aloof,
And my mattress and blankets were out on the roof.

I stole through the parlors till reaching the gloom
Of the nook fitted up as a Japanese room:
I threw myself down on the couch in the corner
And felt that no tramp was ever forlorner.

To make my seclusion more dismally certain,
In front of the couch I drew down the curtain;
Then reveled in pain that was ready to blind me,
And, baby-like, hoped that my mother would find me.

I slept after while, but I don't know how long;
I awoke when an odor, elusive but strong,
And the chat of two girls—now fancy my feeling—
Through my curtain and into the darkness came stealing.

'Twas only my sister Lucile and her chum;
And all I could do was to simply keep "mum";
But, who was it smoking?—this puzzled me quite;
And, anxious as Star on his benefit night,

Regardless of "Peeping Tom's" fate, sir, I drew
The curtain apart—yes I did—I looked through;
The sight that I saw I shall never forget;
Each girl sat there smoking a "Queen" cigarette.

You'd never believe it, unless you have seen
The havoc that lurks in the velvety sheen
Of eyes, and especially eyes black as jet,
When seen through the smoke of a "Queen" cigarette.

I was done for; that very same night I proposed;
And I thank all my stars and the fates that I dozed,
And waked to discover my little Nannette,
There laughing and smoking her "Queen" cigarette.



THE SONG OF STONE

Before the beginning of time,
 Before there was earth or sky;
When the seas were smoke and flame and rime,
 In the midst of chaos was I.

And lo! at the spoken word,
 When the winds and waters fled,
Through the rush and roar my dull heart heard,
 And I lifted up my head.

I arose in mountain peaks,
 Like towers old and gray;

I stand unmoved when the thunder speaks,
And I laugh at the lightning's play.

I hide 'neath the foam-capped waves,
And I hear the storm-bird's cry;
I mark the place of the drowned ones' graves,
When the wrecks have drifted by.

I am crown of the stately arch,
The chancel and street I pave;
And it matters not that above me march,
The king or the peasant slave.

For the feet that pass are dust,
With a leaven of blood and tears;
A crown is wasted by war and rust,
But I live a million years.

I treasure the sculptor's dream,
Till his hand has cunning grown;
Then he disappears like a sun-dried stream,
But I live, for I am Stone.

BETRAYAL

Along the white beach we were straying
One night in a far-away June;
The band in the gallery playing
Conspired, I believe with the moon,
To entangle my heart in the glamour
That dowered the time and the place;
And I suddenly knew some one loved me
By the flush that swept over his face.

But we silently walked as we listened
To that waltz Espagnol by the band,
And watched the white moonbeams that glistened
And whiter made all the white sand;
And I fancied the sea was a maiden
Bedecking herself with her lace
And I knew, ah I knew some one loved me
By the change that came over his face.

Yesterday, in the Mall I was straying,—
I listened again to the band
As that waltz Espagnol it was playing
When, with only a touch of his hand,
One met me, and passed like a shadow
Disappearing at once from the place;
But I knew that he had not forgotten
By the pallor that mantled his face.

TRIFLES

Only a tangled dead vine
Swings in the wind from the trellis;
Naught of the glorious sunshine,
Naught of soft rains in the gloom
Of still summer nights, nor the bloom,
Making sweet the long days with perfume
Can these few withered leaves tell us.

Only a slender white stone,
Silent and pitiless token
Of a young life that has flown
Down to the grave's quiet sleep;
Star-flowers their tender watch keep
And whisper while wand'ring clouds weep,
"Only a heart that was broken."

DOLCE FAR NIENTE

The sunset fires are burning low
 Adown the western reaches;
The leaves in flame and crimson glow
 Upon the stately beeches.

The pathway, there across the mead,
 And through the fields of clover,
Half hidden lies, by feathery weed
 And dry grass covered over.

In all around we see decay;
 Our summer world is dying;
And softly, sadly, night and day,
 "Farewell," the winds are sighing.

"Farewell, farewell to summer leaves,
 And birds and insects singing;
Farewell—amongst the garnered sheaves,
 The 'Harvest Home' is ringing."

Yet, look across the meadow land
 With its low lying sedges;
Past where those gorgeous maples stand,
 Past all those glistening hedges:

Past where the sobbing river lies
 Beneath its arching bridges,
To where those low hills meet the skies
 In gold and russet ridges:

Just over, where the rising mist
 Like fretted silver gleaming;

With seas and streams of amethyst
A fair cloud world lies dreaming.

There, mountain peaks and sunny isles,
With purple vineyards trailing,
And past them all, for miles and miles,
A fleet of ships is sailing.

And while we gaze the seas expand
Into a boundless ocean;
And all around, the smiling land
Awakes to life and motion.

The shepherds climb the glowing hills,
Their snowy flocks attending;
Young children, down the sparkling rills
Their tiny boats are sending.

Red wine and flowers are flashing bright
In costly vase and chalice;
And streams the warm rose-colored light
From out yon marble palace.

Midst rocks and trees we well may trace
The haunt of bards and sages;
That ruin gray has found no place
In hist'ry's dusty pages.

We almost hear the tinkling song,
Or catch the sound of laughter
From troops of elves that flit along
Each bare and shining rafter.

But turn away—the evening wind
Is wild and wilder blowing;

The lamps are lit, our friends are kind,
The hearth fire's warmly glowing.

We know that night will spread her veil,
And hide those vine-clad islands;
And all her ebon tresses trail
Adown those happy highlands.

E'en now we see our gallant fleet
In shapeless ruins flying;
While all around, fair things and sweet
Are slowly fading, dying.

Night leans from her advancing car
With cold and helpless weeping;
We know she'll place a golden star
Where each fair thing is sleeping.

ONLY A DREAM

'Twas only a dream that the shadows lifted;
That the grief and burden of life had fled;
'Twas only a dream that the sunlight sifted
Through swaying vine leaves above my head.

The clouds hang low and are dark as ever,
The world lies wrapt in a shroud of gray;
The winds sigh round me, ah never, never
Shall my soul rejoice in a brighter day.

Yet though my dream was fair and fleeting,
As fair and fleeting as morning dew,
From the Land of Promise it gave me greeting
And haply, hereafter, our dreams come true.

THE MAN WITH THE MEDAL

Here he comes, doff your hat till the hero goes by;
 No, don't stop to listen for trumpets and drums;
No banners are waving, obscuring the sky;
 And speaking to us of the hero that comes.

'Tis only that working man, grizzled and grim
 On his way to the place where he toils for his bread;
You don't care to stand here bareheaded for him,
 Unless you are told what he's done, what he's said?

And what may his name be? Now how can I tell?
 I've asked him no questions, sufficient for me
Is that little bronze medal pinned on his lapel,
 And you, having eyes and good sight too, may see,

And know that his soul has been touched by the power
 That blots out all selfishness, cancels all fear;
Know too, that the world in a perilous hour
 Called out for a man, and this one answered "Here."

Do you think that he waited to spell out his name?
 Or to wonder what kind of a medal he'd wear?
To think how he'd look in the temple of fame?
 And which of his neighbors would gaze on him there?

Not an instant; he looks like the rest of his clan;
 His hands are as rough and his clothes are the same;
But, he's filled up the measure of greatness in man,
 And from that hour to this, he has worn a new name:

And that name is Hero. I care not to see
Where he lives, nor to hear what his neighbors might tell,
Nor the name that they call him, sufficient for me
Is that little bronze medal pinned on his lapel.

GOOD BYE

Sweetheart, good bye, the summer days have seemed,
When you were near, like some fair thing I dreamed;
Through which your face has like an angel's gleamed.

Vainly I strive to make the days more fleet;
And haste to bring the one with joy complete
When you shall come to me again, my sweet.

My busy hands fill up each lagging day
With toil from dawn till evening cool and gray;
While heart and thoughts are with you far away.

The balmy night brings visions sweet and rare,
Of my own darling with her nut-brown hair,
And violet eyes with love light lingering there.

Oh envious time! that will not swiftly fly,
Go to the captive—the condemned to die,
And be my gift to him of earth and sky.

Give but to me one hour free from alarms;
To know my love, with all her girlish charms,
Will safe return to my protecting arms.

Oh whispering wind! to you each hour I cry,
Draw near her with your softest, gentlest sigh
And say, "Until we meet, sweetheart, good bye."

IN THE WILDERNESS

Far in the past the barren brick-fields lie,
Yet still I wander on
Through days that drag their leaden hours by,
Through nights in which I list the owlet's cry,
And with seared eyeballs watch the alien sky
For sign of sullen dawn.

Such noxious growths along my pathway crowd
I almost lose the light
Vouchsafed me from the overhanging cloud;
Grey mists envelop, like a winding shroud
The constant fire, in mercy me allowed
To lead my steps aright.

Yet, at rare times the Master gently calls,
And kindly leads me where
For starving ones the precious manna falls,
And springs gush out from solid, rocky walls;
Then doubt and fear no more my soul appalls;
Then, all the heavy air

Grows sweet with odors as of corn and wine;
I know my feeble hand
Shall lead in joy the lamb and fatted kine,
And bend the branches where pomegranates shine,
And pluck the grapes from many a teeming vine
Within the Promised Land.

MRS. COLEMAN POPE

Friend of but weeks and days,
What tribute has not unto you been paid?
Can I say aught to you of love or praise
That others have not said?

On this, your natal day,
What wishes can I send you from my heart?
What blessings from the heavens can I pray
To come and be your part?

Not the Promethean fire,
The power to move a thousand souls as one—
You have it. Lo! Your satisfied desire
Rests on the laurels won.

Shall wealth to you be given?
Ah, riches take them wings and flee away.
I know your treasures are laid up in heaven
And rust not, nor decay.

Shall I wish many years
May keep you from the mansions of the blest?
Is long life aught but heaviness and tears,
And prayers for dreamless rest?

I'll wish you none of these;
The cup of worldly honor, when 'tis quaffed,
And dying lips are ling'ring o'er the lees,
Is but a bitter draught.

I'll wish you peaceful rest
Beneath the eye that marks the sparrow's fall;
And faith to know He doeth all things best
Who "Made and loveth all."

A L'ABANDON

Oh sing me your saddest song to-night
Some wailing minor strain;
My spirit weeps and my heart beats low
In time with the sobbing rain.

I list for a step on the walk to-night
But I listen all in vain;
There comes no sound through the dark to me
But the slow drip of the rain.

Oh Life, I look on your best to-night
And see but a tangled skein;
Though the sun may shine when the morning comes,
I shall not forget the rain.

TWO DAYS

Sweetheart, yestere'en, within your garden fair,
We stood together, and the level sun
Made burnished gold of your bewildering hair,
And all my being into rapture run
To see the little loves within the lair
Of your blue eyes, come peeping, one by one

And in their pretty insolence to dare
To hang their banners, showing they had won,
On your fair cheek, and keep them waving there.

All was as peaceful as creation's dawn;
Your petted doves came flutt'ring to your hand,
Coquetted with and kissed you, then were gone
To waver, like sea foam upon the sand
Beside the water. Up the velvet lawn
We loitered, and the happy future planned,
The fair, far future! All my soul was drawn
To worship at your feet, and, patient stand
Enraptured, only to be smiled upon.

To-day, the glory of the summer lies
Dead to my heart, as by a black frost chilled;
No sun is in the heavens, the leaden skies
Hang low, with icy rain and sighings filled;
Since you, dear one, have closed your glorious eyes,
And the warm beating of your heart is stilled.
Oh Death! from out the deep my spirit cries;
Look at the grievous thing that you have willed;
Look at my love, there in her white disguise.

IN RETREAT

Within the gate I stand and wait,
Although full well I know the way;
I love to feel the quiet steal
Upon me, as it did that day
When first my feet sought this retreat,
And first my soul learned how to pray.

I greet each saint that far and faint
 Smiles down upon me from the walls;
Within their eyes, I recognize
 The spirit that my spirit calls;
I leave all pain; all thoughts of gain
 Out where the burning sunlight falls.

In prayer and praise the precious days
 Relieved from every sordid care,
So quietly, go slipping by
 That each one seems a vision fair
Of cloister dim, and vesper hymn,
 And sweet wan faces bowed in prayer.

Ah me! full soon, at morn or noon,
 I must repass these kindly doors;
And grieve to feel that I shall kneel
 No more upon these sacred floors,
Nor breathe the air, all sweet with prayer,
 Within these long dim corridors.

But the dear Christ whose love sufficed
 The martyrs and the saints to bless,
Will watch my way, though far I stray
 And though my erring feet shall press,
The downward road that leads from God
 And far into the wilderness.

ALONE

The door is closed. The warmth and light
Are shut within; on through the night
I walk alone, and know 'tis right.

So narrow is the path I tread,
So dense the darkness 'round me spread,
I scarce may see one star o'erhead.

I cannot tell how rough the way
May grow before the break of day,
Yet from the path I dare not stray.

And, should I see the light no more,
Though winds should rave and rain should pour,
Still it was right to—close the door.



LAST YEAR

Last year—how it rained that day!
'Twas the equinox in September:
Brown leaves in the dank grass lay
On the lawn,—do you remember?

We heeded not the gray
Of the skies,—by the glowing embers
We planned for the coming May
And all the to come Septembers.

But a trick of Fate—the play
Of Chance, and our dreams were shattered;
A letter that went astray,—
Our hopes, like the leaves were scattered.

As I sit alone to-day
By my fire's fast whitening embers
I wonder, will skies be gray
In all the to come Septembers?

BEDOUIN SERENADE

You will hear the beat of hoofs of steel,
As away to the west the shadows reel,
When the sun lights up each drop of dew,
I'll ride from the edge of the world to you.

When the moon sails up from her couch of cloud,
And each star is in adoration bowed,
Then my steed, as swift as an eagle's wing
Will answer give to the song I sing.

I'll meet you out in the desert wide,
Or down by the sea where the tempests bide,
And my heart forever staunch and true
Will know no love but my horse and you.

My love, my darling, turn not away,
While the summer winds 'mongst the young leaves play,
Your hand in mine, Oh my love, my bride,
Away to the edge of the world we'll ride.

THE COASTGUARD

Give us a song of a cottage brown,
Mother and children three,
All safe at rest
In their snug warm nest,
And the father out at sea.
When the shrieking blast

Is hurrying past,
And the tempest-driven hail
Is beating down
On the shivering town,
Like wheat 'neath the thresher's flail,
The children stay
In their pretty play
To watch the wind and sleet;
And say, with eyes
All wonder-wise,
"The coastguard walks his beat:
No need of fright,
For the boat to-night
Will anchor in the shoal;
We laugh and play,
Through the livelong day,
And trust in the beach patrol."

HEREDITY

Never one step untrammeled;
Never unfettered flight;
Drifting on unknown currents,
Like half-wrecked ships at night.

Warring with alien impulse;
Striving to gain control,
Haply of half the power
Condensed in one human soul.

Seeing with dual vision:
Hearing with strangers' ears;
Judging with brain that's moldered
To ashes and dust for years.

Touching the world with feelings,
 Copied, distorted, blurred;
Answering, one to another,
 With echoes we never heard.

Over the placid waters,
 Leaning, we only trace
A dead man's wavering shadow,
 Smile in a dead man's face.

Lo, where Ambition beckons;
 Showing his shining track;
Gladly we'd follow upward,
 But dead hands hold us back.

Vainly we bid them slumber
 Where the worm with the grave-rat delves;
We struggle, but cannot escape them,
 For we are the dead ourselves.

INCOMPATIBILITY

Shall I time my step to the halting pace
 Of this dwarfish soul that has drifted in
On my quiet life, there to keep her place
 Till death us part? Shall I stain with sin

Each fair new day? Shall each slur and slight
 Be answered back with slight and slur?
Shall I mar each hour with petty spite,
 As I tread this maze of hate with her?

Let me be patient: I'll walk apart
 In soul, at least, from her atmosphere.

Let me be patient, nor heed the smart
Of her bitter words. God sent her here

Mayhap that I, by this strangest guide,
Some else undreamed-of height may gain;
And she, though steeped in scorn and pride,
Some lesson learn from my constant pain.

THE LAW

'Twas but a word,
But at its utterance an old grief stirred
And lifted blood-shot eyes from years of sleep
That lay so deep
I thought 'twas death.
The wakened, sobbing breath
Opens the lips marked with the stain
Of fever, and the chill of racking pain.

My hard-won peace
Is shattered by remembrance, and the lease
Upon endurance and forgetfulness
Is forfeit none the less
That heart and brain
Cry out for sleep again;
For slumber undisturbed and long,
Or justice for an unforgotten wrong.

This is the law:
By toil and blows one from the rock may draw
Its flinty heart and bear it far away;
And yet the day
Will surely come

When, though insensate, dumb,
The rifled rock betrays the sin;
Proclaiming all the emptiness within.

No wound is healed
That by unsightly scar is not revealed;
No wrong, though borne in silence is forgot;
And not one jot
Or tittle of the law
Shall pass; no flaw
In all God's scheme shall be discerned,
Each soul at last must take what it has earned.

THOSE FRAGMENTS

We read in The Book of five thousand who dined
On five barley loaves and two fishes;
To prepare such a meal, sure no one would mind,
And there was no washing of dishes.

No mention is made if the fishes were boiled,
Fried, roasted and carefully basted
And filled with sage dressing, or, daintily broiled;
But we're told that nothing was wasted.

The fragments were gathered, twelve baskets were filled;—
With wonder the folks must have scanned them;
And then, if the women in such things were skilled,
Very likely they potted or canned them.

And this one commandment is still in full force
The same as the day it was spoken;

Some people will reverence this law, of course,
Though the ten Moses left should be broken.

They gather the fragments with infinite care,
Sacrifice time and labor to use them;
And, for dearest and best will such messes prepare
That the hungriest tramp would refuse them.

'Tis well to be frugal, to economize;
To know how to make tempting dishes
Of left-over scraps, but the woman who's wise
Will manage her loaves and her fishes

With such cunning judgment, such well-applied zeal
That, if some wandering beggar should ask it,
She may give him the scraps from each well-ordered meal
And put them in *one little* basket.

IN OUR MIDST

A hurrying form in the dark;
Feet gath-'ring momentum with flight;
A face, pale with anguish and fright
Flits by, a mere vision of night;
Past theatre, church door and park.

A breathless race to the river;
One glance at the far-away skies—
No pitying angel replies
To the terrified, questioning eyes
Gazing into the boundless forever.

A boat riding high on the tide;
The fishermen wrangle and fret
At *something* that tangles the net;
Will the green fields of earth soon forget
What the river refuses to hide?



IN THE GALLERY

Yes, that's my husband, trifling there
With pretty Flora's satin fan;
He has the true patrician air,
And well you say, "A handsome man."

You see he glances up at me,
Then turns to chatter with the girls;
'Twas only that he wished to see
If I wore emeralds or pearls.

Down there amongst those earnest men
Pray note him in the speaker's place;
You'd scarce believe the time was, when
I found upon that thoughtful face

My hopes achieved, my dreams fulfilled,
The rounded perfectness of life;
Fate otherwise for both had willed:
That pale, plain woman is his wife.

MY INDIAN BASKET

Little Leota sits weaving her grasses
And slim willow wands in the glow of the sun;
Forward and backward her bone needle passes,
Adding the coils till the wee basket's done.

Crooning a hymn that the good Padre taught her,
Blending her voice with the sob of the sea,
Happy and sweet sits Coacoochee's daughter,
Weaving, and chanting her Ave Marie.

When she has finished the basket she handles,
What a fine price the Senora will pay!
With it she will purchase the tallest of candles,
And light up the altar as brilliant as day.

There she sits rapt in her dreams beatific
Patient and still till her basket is done;
Facing the waves of the mighty Pacific,
And backing the Mission that basks in the sun.

Four days' journey eastward the basket was carried,
Fifty-five years ago if it is a day;
My grandmother then was a girl and she married,
A dark-eyed ranchero of Santa Barbara.

And here is the basket. My scissors and thimble
Repose in its depths without giving a sign
That their snug place of rest might serve as a symbol
Of patient endeavor quite nearly divine.

And oft as I gaze on my work-basket laden
With spools and with skeins, there's a vision for me
Of little Leota, the Indian maiden
Who sang as she wove it, out west by the sea.

And still in its meshes a faint odor lingers,
A hint of the mesa when grasses were wet;
And I fancy the prints of the slender brown fingers
And a breath of the hymn are discernible yet.



MY DOG

No more; oh my friend, my companion!
No more, oh thou heart of pure gold;
No more, over long pathless meadows;
No more through the green, fragrant wold.

When the dawn is first tingeing the hill-tops,
Or when evening comes on cool and gray;
No more will our shadows together
Pass over each dear well-known way.

No more will you list for my footsteps;
Nor start at the sound of my gun;
Nor wait for the word of approval,
Declaring your work is well done.

No more will you watch my expression
As the devotee watches the skies;
Giving answer to each word of kindness
In the beautiful, eloquent eyes.

Alas, for their film-covered splendor!
 Alas, such a sight I should see
As the pleading, the agonized glances
 That, dying, you turned upon me.

Cold cynic, avaunt! Do not utter
 Again the light words you have said;
Repeat not the sneer in my presence,
 "*'Tis only a dog that is dead.*"

Why is it, oh, valiant immortal,
 You hold yourself better than he?
Are you kinder, more patient, more loyal?
 I pray you, explain it to me.

Say, too, for the All-Wise, our Father
 Has hidden it deep from my ken—
Why are honor and truth for the speechless,
 And souls for the women and men?

Oh, for a far-reaching religion
 Encompassing man, horse and hound!
Oh, to find the dumb things that have loved us
 In some fair, after-death hunting ground!

With men I have reveled and wandered;
 On mountain and plain left our mark;
They have pledged me their faith in the sunshine
 And dealt cruel blows in the dark.

Fair women have whispered, "I love you,"
 (But what have I cared for their slips?)
They have smiled in the eyes of my rivals
 While their kisses were warm on my lips.

But, my dog? Ah, his love never wavered,
He was true to his very last breath,
No rival had I in his bosom
Till came inexorable death.

Farewell, Oh my friend, my companion,
Farewell, Oh thou heart of pure gold;
Farewell to the lights and the shadows
That flit over meadow and wold.

Farewell, Oh my friend, my companion,
The truest that God ever gave;
Farewell to the ways that have known us;
Here I fire my last shot on your grave.

IF THEY HAD FAILED

If they had failed—our Colonies' Commanders
Who managed things in Seventeen seventy-six,
They might have sworn, as did the troops at Flanders,
That it was one of Fortune's low-down tricks.

Then Washington had hung as high as Haman,
A stalwart rebel, past all help or hope,
Unless a faithful Pythias or Damon
Had swung for him upon the English rope.

If they had failed we might have had no quarreling
About the tariff nor the income tax;
There might have been against the Crown some snarling,
But we'd have had no Anglo-Maniacs.

For we would all be so exceeding English,
The commonest of all our sons and daughters
Would baffle quite, an expert to distinguish
Them from the product grown across the waters.

But, since the facts are as they are, past cavil,
And we, at best, are but American,
When we've a chance, we'll straight to London travel,
And while at 'ome be English as we can.

And if we ever find the slightest trace of
Real English blood that down the years has trailed,
We'll cherish it, as all we have in place of
What might have been if Washington had failed.

DEAD

Now his kindly eyes are dim,
And his heart is still and cold,
Lying 'neath the graveyard mould;
All the world is gray and old,
And is raining tears for him.

See! my faithful landmark's down,
Buried in the shifting sand
Of Life's desert; lone I stand
Reaching vainly for the hand
That has led me all the way
From my cradle to this day.
To my tears and prayers and cries,
Mocking echo brings replies;
Low, how low the dear dead lies,
Heedless all of smile or frown.

What is death? the wise declare
 That the dead shall rise again,
Free from human woe and pain,
 Crowned with strength and beauty rare,
Through the Christ on Calvary slain.

And they calmly talk of faith
 While before our aching sight,
Icy cold, and still, and white
 Lie our loved ones, in the blight
And the solitude of death.

Friends, forgive me; faith is sweet
 When the skies are blue and clear;
When fair flowers spring round our feet
 And there comes no hint, no fear
Of the grave and winding sheet.

But when Israfil has come,
 And we stand in sorrow dumb,
Or with bitter tears and cries,
 Can we see with grief-blind eyes
Where a sweet hereafter lies?

We may clasp our dead and weep—
 Tears that fall like blasting rain;
Call and pray till words are pain;
 They will never wake again
From their cold and dreamless sleep.

There we leave them since we must;
 "Earth to earth and dust to dust":
But we carry with us thence
 That bewildering, aching sense
Of their loss; and Providence
 Cannot give a recompense.

OLD GOLD

Her parasol's tipped with a touch of old gold;
 Her hat has been dipped in the same tawny dye;
The loops and the knots peeping out from each fold
 Of her gown she declares were invented to hold
The plaits in their places; believe it? Not I.
 I think that she mainly this toilette designed
To hint to me plainly the state of her mind.
 She knows, as she knows there are stars in the sky,
How madly I love her; and isn't she bold
 To crush every hope, every dream that I hold
By showing how dearly she loves only gold?

The road is so long and so rough is the way,
 So dense is the throng in the race after fame,
I fear, should I join it courageous and gay,
 At the top of the mount I'd be wrinkled and gray,
And ready to die after carving my name.
 And Oh so debasing the search after wealth,
The downward way tracing with youth, peace and health
 Sacrificed ere the glittering bauble I'd claim.
Is it well that my honor and manhood be sold
 For wealth or for fame that at last I may fold
To my heart this gay vision of gleaming old gold?

THROUGH THE GATE

The gate creaks loud on its rusty hinges,
I stand and wait at the open door;
The house-dog along the foot-path cringes,
As making way for a visitor.

But no one hails me with fair good morrow;
No eye meets mine with a greeting smile;
No neighbor comes my good cheer to borrow,
Or respite give to my grief awhile.

Yet I feel, though all is still around me,
Since the gate swung wide and closed again,
That a gracious, unseen friend has found me,
And I sigh: *I know the where and when*

I met you last, and I give you greeting;
You, grown beyond me and wondrous wise;
And my heart is thrilled with the joy of meeting,
Though half abashed by the spirit eyes.

But why should this foolish fear beset me
For aught that the spirit sight may find?
The love that death cannot make forget me,
Will, as of old, to my faults be kind.

So, oft as I hear the old gate creaking,
I stand at the door with welcoming hand,
To meet this soul that my soul is seeking;—
I listen closely;—I understand.

And I know this friend will not forsake me;
This spirit kinsman, and, soon or late,
Together we'll walk the path; he'll take me
With him forever beyond the gate.



LOOKING BACKWARD

It seems at most, a day or two ago
Since older mothers, spectacled and wise,
Watched all my busy hurrying to and fro
With half indulgent, half rebuking eyes,

And chided me, in kindly worded phrase,
For breaking into every hour's employ
And clipping into fragments all my days
To play, and converse with my little boy.

And, though I answered with respectful air,
I fear I have not any wiser grown;
I so regret the gentle, hindering care,
Now that I sit within my house alone:

And I am glad that through those precious years,
I gave my time, ungrudging, to my son;
Joyed in his pleasures, soothed his April tears,
Till day by day we grew so nearly one,

That now, when meeting him in crowded ways,
Where lust of power, and greed of gold combine,
I read within his dark eyes' steadfast gaze,
Through all the changes, still my boy is mine.

THE THIRD GENERATION

Some day, my dear, when all my years are sped,
When I have found my own low dwelling place
Within some silent city of the dead,
You'll know how I have longed to see your face.

Your little daughter, leaning on your knee,
Beguiling you with prattle and caress,
Will teach you, some day, what you are to me;
Through her you'll know my utter loneliness.



IF WE COULD KNOW

If we could know when soft replies
And smiling lips and tranquil eyes
Hide hearts that tremble, throb and ache
As silently they grieve and break
Beneath their mask of graceful lies,
We might not deem ourselves so wise
To measure grief by tears and sighs;
Some hasty judgments might not make,
But love, for hidden sorrow's sake
Our friend within his gay disguise.

If we could know how in the mines
Of tenderness the pure gold shines,
We might not feel the smarting stings
The longed-for message often brings
From heart that round our own entwines;
We'd read between the formal lines

And careless words, unerring signs
 Of love that upward, onward springs
To meet its own, on steadfast wings
 And commune hold on sacred shrines.



AT MIDNIGHT

Let us part friends, Old Year, while yet there lingers
 Within your breast one spark of flutt'ring life;
I clasp in peace your unresponsive fingers
 And in this hour, forgetting all of strife,
I thank you for the promises you tendered
 When first we met—how fair, how white the day!
And, if the service you have hourly rendered
 Somewhat falls short, still earnestly I say,
I thank you. As I read your dimming dial,
 I see how all is fitting and complete;
Some prayers are answered best by their denial,
 And blessings come on strange and alien feet.

Go to your rest with all the years that slumber
 Within the endless sepulcher of Time;
Go to your rest, you may no longer cumber
 The world of men; the bells begin the chime
That speeds the failing breath, the soul that's shriven,
 And children's voices in the temples sing:
Farewell, Old Year, forgive, as you're forgiven!
 The King is dead!—Oh joy! Long live the King.

SAINT VALENTINE'S EVE

I sit alone, my hearth is gray with ashes,
The fire burns low, the room is growing chill;
The blaze leaps up in furtive, fitful flashes,
The shadows dance, then all is dark and still.

I'm dreaming dreams of other years; the season
Brings back the hopes 'tis useless to recall;
Yet, 'gainst the sternest mandates of my reason,
Persistent comes, the sweetest face of all

The blooming ones that flashed across my vision
When life was young and all the world was fair;
When days and nights were simply dreams elysian,
That brought me Lettice with her golden hair.

I vowed to build my love a marble palace
Where naught should come to mar the flying hours;
With my own hands I'd lift her golden chalice
That she might sip the nectar of the flowers.

Ah me! my days, though hardly sere, are yellow;
I'm thirty-odd, and have not wealth nor fame,
Excepting in that rosy little fellow
Up-stairs asleep who answers to my name.

I've sat and dreamed till I am in a fair way
To have the blues;—my failures are so great;
But hark,—there comes a step adown the stairway;—
The clock strikes one;—dear me how shocking late.

A gracious presence fills the room with sweetness;
A small soft hand is closely clasping mine;
Why should I grumble? here is life's completeness;
My Lettice, precious wife,—my Valentine.



DERNIER RESSORT

When life and love and I were young together
I hailed with joy this season of the year;
No matter what might be the current weather,
My Valentines blew in from far and near.

But now since life and I are old and stupid,
And love and I are not on speaking terms,
If I should meet, by chance, the boy, Dan Cupid,
I'd shun him, as the carrier of germs,

That bring on courtship, marriage and divorces
And alimonies; Oh, such grievous things!
Strange that such wonderfully powerful forces
Are hidden under Cupid's little wings;

But, since it's true, and truth brooks no denial,
We're told to live, and smile—(it seems a sin
We're not allowed to whimper under trial),
But—well, I'll bear it, but I will not grin.

And since I get not even one small letter
To say I'm dearest in some manly breast,
I'm free to state that no man's any better
Than he should be, and—you may guess the rest.

And I will write a line to one who dearly
Has loved me all my life and loves me still.
When she subscribes herself, "Yours most sincerely,"
I know she means it, it quite fills the bill.

On days when I am worried with vexation
Of little things that daily life besets,
I send to her a tearful invitation
To loaf with me—she never sends regrets;

But comes with me, and sits in silence by me—
We're such true friends she always understands,—
She knows the little, measly things that try me,
That storm my brain, and tie my tongue and hands.

Then, while we hold a heart to heart reunion,
False friends, small aims, are laid upon the shelf.
I gather peace while holding close communion
With my own soul, Her Majesty, Myself.

And now I write myself this little token
To show I'm true, and constant as the sun;
And since my faith to my own soul's unbroken,
I cannot well be false to anyone.

MY EASTER SAINT

Pretty Clarice is tying her bonnet
With rose-colored ribbons, dainty and thin:
There's a tuft of tangled long grasses upon it
A fair, peach-blossomy face within.
I watch her, and wonder, can it be a sin
For her to smile back at the face in the glass,
So sweet in the shade of the tangled long grass?

Thoughtless Clarice, the church bells are ringing
While you are standing enrapt with your face,
Knotting your ribbons and absently singing
"Christ is risen"; each curl in its place
Out she goes tripping personified grace;
And with a lingering gratified smile
Curving her lips as she walks up the aisle.

"Christ is risen"; the singers are chanting;
Grandly the melody soars to the skies;
Through the tall window the sunlight is slanting
And as I follow the ray, in surprise,
Notice the splendor of Clarice's eyes;
Dewy and radiant with the sublime
Thoughts that are born of the place and the time.

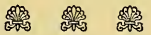
There as she stands in the glow of the morning,
With her sweet spirit at peace, I confess,
All that she wears for her beauty's adorning
Takes not one whit from her soul's loveliness.
There in her new Easter bonnet and dress
Stands she a saint, her nimbus a mass
Of dull golden hair and tangled long grass.

SEPTEMBER

When through all the woodland passes
Wave the tall and feathered grasses
In the wakened wind that whispers
Vaguely of the coming rain;
When the goldenrod and aster
Lift their gorgeous heads, and faster

Fly the ripened leaves of summer
Far across the stubbly plain,
When the riant, flaunting weeds
Scatter everywhere their seeds,
White as ash of dying ember,
That's September.

When the mellow fruit is dropping,
And the soft-eyed kine are cropping
Where the harvest late was gathered,
Of the plenteous aftermath;
When we hear the constant patter
Of ripe nuts, and squirrels chatter
To each other as they scurry
Up and down each woodsy path,
When we see the mist-clad hills,
And we hear the shallow rills,
Like a dream we half remember,
That's September.



THANKSGIVING MORNING

What are you thinking of, pretty Florine,
As you go tripping through parlor and hall,
Trailing your autumn wreaths over the sheen
Of the long mirror, across the gray wall?
Notes like a bird's from your rosy lips fall;
Is it a song of thanksgiving and praise
From your young heart to the Ancient of Days?

Like a good fairy's your deft fingers fly;
Pictures look out from their frames with new grace;

But the glad glance that is lighting your eye
 Is not because of the time, but your place
 Fronting the mirror; you see your fair face
Fairer than ever before in the frame
Of maple leaves, russet and crimson and flame.

And you still warble your gay little song,
 Frivolous words to a rollicking tune;
Ah, you are young, the days are all long,
 November to you is as pleasant as June;
 You dream not of years that will wither you soon;
And if a thought of thanksgiving and prayer
Stirs in your heart 'tis because you are fair.

Listen! not one single instant is stilled
 The song or the singer; her fingers and tongue
Keep time with each other; the whole house is filled
 With "Ave Maria"; and bright wreaths are flung
 In lavish profusion; and ripe fruits are hung
Where warmest the rays of the morning sun fall
And Mary, the Mother, smiles down from the wall.

Your pardon, Florine, that I thought to upbraid;
 I know that your heart is as pure as the dew;
All beauty and grace by the Father is made,
 And who but the Father bestowed them on you?
 I see in your eyes the sweet soul looking through.
I'll thank Him with song, and I'll thank Him with prayer
That He gave me Florine and He made her so fair.

LES MISERABLES

For what are we thankful? Oh sages declare
From your high, carven pulpits to suffering men;
We list to your sermon, your anthem, your prayer,
Your soft benediction; no answer is there
To the question we ask you; the chill autumn air
Blows our words to our faces again.

You tell of the merchant ships on the wide seas,
You talk of the wealth that the harvests will yield;
Of the fruit hanging low on the o'er-burdened trees,
Of the odorous breath of the vine on the breeze;
But whence comes the mandate, the law that decrees
That we starve in the brown stubble field?

We battled at noonday with dust and with heat,
We sang and we jested to lighten our toil;
We hoped the drear winter with plenty to greet—
Ah, the mirage to near-fainting spirit was sweet—
But, empty our hands, bare and bleeding our feet;
The labor was ours, not the spoil.

The harvests are garnered; the myriad sheaves
That piled the wide fields like gold from the mine,
Fill up the great barns, from the floor to the eaves;
The grapes that grew ripe amidst whispering leaves,
Stain red, laughing lips, while a starving one grieves,
Outside, for the dregs of the wine.

For what are we thankful? For prisons and pain,
For our babes murd'ring sleep with their famishing cries;

For the snow, the sleet, the wind and the rain
Beating out the dull life from the heart and the brain;
For the grave we at last in Potters-field gain;
For the stone with its deeply cut lies.

IN QUIET HOURS

In quiet hours when hind'ring cares
Are cast aside, the spirit fares
Far up the way where grief and pain
Are felt no more, nor loss nor gain;
The world is sweet with answered prayers.

The soul her banquet then prepares;
With friend and foe alike she shares;
No selfish thought the heart may stain
In quiet hours.

Thus freed awhile from sordid cares
What heights sublime the spirit dares!
Then gentle strangers cross the plain
The shelter of our tents to gain;
We talk with angels unawares,
In quiet hours.

OH, FALLEN LEAF!

Oh, fallen leaf! When north winds blow,
And send you fluttering to and fro,
Do memories of days gone by,
The sun's warm kiss, the nestling's cry,

The streams that babble as they flow
Toward summer lands where spice-trees grow;
Do dreams of loves, of high or low,
Endow you with this crimson dye,
Oh, fallen leaf?

You may forget, but this I know,
If I lay cold and white as snow,
And one should come and softly sigh,
"I loved her so!" in swift reply,
My cheek with your own tint would glow,
Oh, fallen leaf!

ON DISTANT HILLS

On distant hills fresh verdure lies
Unbroken 'gainst the tender skies;
The feathery tops of slender trees
Are lifted lightly by the breeze
That midst their fragrant foliage dies.

No bird of somber plumage flies
Along their slopes; but wild sweet cries
Are woven into joyous glees
On distant hills.

Dear heart, learn nearer joys to prize;
Ere to those sunny peaks you rise
Rough paths you'll find; chill winds will freeze;
From bitter cups you'll drain the lees;
Stay close at home and fix glad eyes
On distant hills.

WHEN TWILIGHT FALLS

When twilight falls and sunset dyes
Turn gray and dim in western skies,
 When coming night blots out each trace
 Of pleasant path and flowery space,
And winds awake in fitful sighs,

Then toil and care, without disguise,
As angels stand before our eyes
 In humble beauty, lowly grace,
 When twilight falls.

Then half-forgotten forms arise,
And memory hither, thither flies
 To bring from out each covert place
 The loved and lost; and face to face
We stand again, in sweet surprise,
 When twilight falls.

THANKSGIVING DAY

Thanksgiving Day! what visions rise
Of frosted cake and pumpkin pies!
Of raiders in the chilly dawn
Ransacking roost, and barn, and lawn,
To find the feathered sacrifice.

'Tis then the bird that won the prize
At county fair ignobly dies
That he may grace our feast upon
 Thanksgiving Day.

If our theology is lies
As some quite knowing folk surmise,
If souls of friends, now dead and gone
Inhabit turkey, pig or fawn,
How must they view with fearsome eyes
Thanksgiving Day.

HAPPY RETURNS

May 8, 1830. May 8, 1911.

Happy returns of this fair day;
My dear, if fervent wishes may
Fly through the intervening space
And greet you in your honored place,
Then will each breeze from far away

From rosy dawn till evening gray
Come laden, from the friends who pray
For you this sweet and crowning grace,
Happy returns.

And hopes, that pain its hand shall stay;
That love and peace, in glad array,
May banish every lingering trace
Of anguish from your placid face;
And bring on each succeeding May,
Happy returns.

THE TIDE WILL TURN

The tide will turn; no trick of chance
Can make the leaping waves advance

One inch beyond their lawful place;
 Each drop fills its allotted space,
In all the white-capped green expanse.

The while we watch with fearing glance,
 The waters swirl and break and dance;
Half deeming flight a saving grace,
 The tide will turn.

Oh, troubled heart, when fears enhance
 Thy woes, and Fortune looks askance;
And shows the dark side of her face—
 The day is gone and lost the race—
Take courage; throw not down the lance;
 The tide will turn.

WE STILL ARE SEVEN

We still are seven. Time steals the grace
 From youthful form and dimpled face;
He touches with his finger bold
 The shining tresses—bronze and gold,
And frosty silver leaves in place;

 And many weary leagues of space
Where fields and rivers close enlace,
Divide us; yet the truth we hold,
 We still are seven.

And though the hand of time efface
 With ruthless touch each ling'ring trace
Of youth, our hearts can ne'er grow old;
 The years are vanished, backward rolled;
In soul we meet, in love embrace;
 We still are seven.

AT SEVENTY-SIX

Seventy-six; and wondrous fair,
My mother, with her silver hair;
Upon her cheek where bloomed the rose
In other days, the lily blows
In purity beyond compare.

I can but guess the weight of care
Her hands and heart have had to bear;
I know how calm her life stream flows
At seventy-six.

When down the sunset road I fare,
For days like these I scarcely dare
To hope, nor that such sweet repose
Will brood upon my evening's close
As is my mother's gracious share
At seventy-six.

OH LITTLE CHILD!

Oh little Child, some blessing rare
Must light the path on which you fare;
Some talisman of saintly grace
Time cannot dim, nor death efface
For sake of her whose name you bear.

Were she now in her vacant chair
How would her tender, brooding care
Create for you a sacred place,
Oh little Child!

If on your cheek, or eyes or hair,
Affection's gaze shall fondly dare
In faint and flitting lines to trace
Some record of that dear dead face,
Then deem yourself surpassing fair,
Oh little Child!



COME NOT TOO NEAR

Come not too near, friend, leave a space
Of solitude, where, face to face,
My soul and I may stand alone.
Some sacred sorrows I have known
And some sweet joys, that by your grace

Shall not stand in the market place.
Some lines a friend may not efface;
So, though through years has friendship grown,
Come not too near.

Rough ways, or fair we all must pace;
In flowers or blood our foot-prints trace;
From ash-white lips is wrung the moan
Or laughter to the air is blown.
Though glad the day, or lost the race,
Come not too near.



IF I HAD KNOWN

If I had known, dear one, upon that day
How you in anguish moaned the hours away,

I could not then have decked my burnished hair
Nor with light converse made the moments fare
So fleetly on, with song and laughter gay.

Was never storm that could my footsteps stay,
Nor periled path that I would not essay,
To reach, and take you in my tend'rest care,
If I had known.

But no least whisper did the truth betray,
Nor pallid fancy set in dim array,
The pangs you suffered. Nothing said, "Beware!
Death draws so near he chills the summer air."
The bluest skies had turned to ashen gray,
If I had known.



THAT QUAINT OLD HYMN

That quaint old hymn my mother sings—
What visions fair its cadence brings
Of verdant fields and sapphire skies
Where suns shall neither set nor rise;

Of angels with their snow-white wings,
And harps of gold whose music rings
Forever to the king of kings;
Small wonder she should fondly prize
That quaint old hymn.

If it be true that memory clings,
When life is past, to earthly things,
I'll find, some day in paradise
An angel with my mother's eyes
Who'll sing to harp with golden strings,
That quaint old hymn.

ROBIN'S-EGG-BLUE

Robin's-egg-blue was the bonnet she wore;
Her bodice was laced behind and before
With cords of a shimmering silvery glint;
Each fold of her gown gave a shadowy hint,
A shadowy hinting of color, no more.

A glove that I know I found on the floor;
Some day to its owner this glove I'll restore,
Like the hat and the gown of that exquisite tint,
Robin's-egg-blue.

I knelt at her feet; my gear and my store,
My heart and my soul, my wisdom and lore
Were hers for the taking, were hers without stint—
Were I Solomon's self, my fortune a mint,—
What she said? never mind, I'll forever adore
Robin's-egg-blue.

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